



BARS Billerica Amateur Radio Society

NEWS FOR AND BY BARS MEMBERS

MAY 2026

Members are encouraged to bring flea market items to the meetings. We will have a table in the back of the hall for folks to sell or give away excess items from your shack!

A Message from the President By Doug Bruce, N1WRN

Greetings, Fellow Members,

First off, I would like to thank everyone for attending the last in-person Club Meeting in April. It was great to see the renewed interest in in person meetings. I think a factor could have been the fact that the weather has improved greatly from the cold and snowy winter we just experienced here in New England. I would like to let everyone know that we will have coffee and donuts at the May 6 in-person meeting at the Church, so hopefully that will draw more members out of the woodwork to attend the meeting.

I would like to thank everyone who has brought "free stuff" to the last couple of meetings. The "free stuff" accomplishes two things; one is to help clean out a fellow member's shack, and two it gives vital ham radio resources to Club members to further their ham radio experience. I picked up a couple of ARRL Operating manuals to read at night after supper to increase my knowledge base. As they say, knowledge is king!

As a reminder, Field Day is only 8 weeks away, so please be thinking of ways to come and help make the event a success like it has been in the past for B.A.R.S members. We always encourage new hams and those that want to become hams to attend this great event, so please spread the word about Field Day 2026. We will be having great food from What The Fork caterers in Billerica, as well as a phenomenal Sunday morning breakfast cooked by our host Nan. Please feel free to contact

myself or our new Field Day Director Tim, K1DC for more information, or go to the B.A.R.S website at <https://www.w1hh.org>.

As always, I want to remind everyone that there are always plenty of great Dxpeditions on the air these days. Among those on now are Central African Republic, Liberia, Nauru and Montserrat, so now is a good time to add these countries to your DXCC totals while they are on the air. Clublog offers a real time updated list of current live streams, so take advantage of this great resource and chase some great DX on the airwaves. DXing is one of the multitude of great avenues to pursue in our great hobby.

As a result of making DX contacts, as well as stateside contacts, this leads into one of my favorite aspects of the hobby, the QSL card! When I first started on HF, my goal was to get a paper card from all 50 states so I could apply for my Worked ALL States Award the old fashioned way, with QSL cards! Now, I get QSL cards from all over the world and I have them in a nice album, like John KC1FTJ, does! He helped inspire me to chase QSL cards!

Lastly, I hope everyone who went to Nearfest on 5/1 and 5/2 got something for the shack that they absolutely had to have. One year, as my Elmer and I were leaving, we saw a pristine Collins 30L1 for sale near the front gate. We stopped and before you knew it, that amplifier was in my trunk and on the way to my shack! You just never know what you will find.

As always, I want to remind everyone that B.A.R.S is a G.O.T.A. Club (Get On The Air!), so get out there and make contacts in your favorite mode! That microphone and mouse aren't going to key and click themselves!

73 and good DX,
Doug
N1WRN

Next BARS meeting: May 6 at 7:00 PM - “Program to be Announced”

Speaker: TBD



We will announce the link to join the Zoom meeting before the meeting, but it will be posted to the BARS email list and should not be shared outside our Club. Are you on the email list? If not, please send an email to

bars-subscribe@wl1hh.org

and then simply reply to the robot response from the server and you will be subscribed.

Observing our Zoom meeting requires only a web browser and headphones/speakers. You do not need a webcam or microphone unless you want to speak or be seen.

Before our meeting date, please go to <https://zoom.us/test> and see if it will function for you. If you have problems, we can try to assist – feel free to ask questions on the BARS email list.

I am looking forward to “seeing” many of you there on Wednesday, 5/6, at 1900.

Doug, N1WRN
President, Billerica Amateur Radio Society

From the Editor’s Desk By Marla Wallace, WA1GSF

I just realized that I’ve been a ham for sixty years. I got my ticket at about the same time I graduated from high school. Back then, you had to pass a code exam at five words a minute

in order to obtain the lowest-class license: the Novice, which gave you CW privileges on a small portion of 80, 40, 15 and 10 meters at reduced power and using crystal control. Furthermore, the license was only good for a year and was not renewable. This was the entry-level license back in the day. The theory was that you would polish your operating skills, improve your code speed and learn more about radio while getting on the air and then within the year you’d take the exam for a higher class of license.

The next tier came in two flavors: Technician and General. Both licenses were good for five years and renewable. They required passing the same theory module, but the code requirement for the Tech was five words per minute whereas the General required thirteen. And both licenses allowed you to operate phone, use a VFO, and run full power. The difference was that the Tech privileges restricted operation to the bands from 50 MHz and up, whereas the General gave you the same privileges but on all the HF bands of the time (160, 80, 40, 20, 15, and 10 meters) as well. Since I was heading off to college, I opted for the renewable Tech license.

This bifurcated privilege scheme had the unfortunate effect of “dead ending” the Technician licensees. Having HF privileges was insufficient incentive to get the CW speed up to thirteen WPM, for me at least. So I was stuck on the VHF and UHF bands where almost nobody used CW. I operated phone exclusively but learned a lot about radio technology of the era.

The VHF gear of the time was usually either repurposed commercial service (i.e.: taxicab or police band) radios or was home-brew. Before FM and repeaters came in, there were almost no companies making ham gear for those bands. (My own station – on 6 meters – used a taxicab radio as the transmitter and a home-brew receiver.) I used that station for about a decade and managed to work seventeen states, thanks to a good solar maximum and a great QTH. But I didn’t upgrade my license (to Extra) until the FCC dropped the code requirement in the 1990s.

I got into 2 meter FM repeaters when the Honeywell Radio Club (W1DC) took on the project of constructing a repeater. I designed and constructed the control logic for the machine, originally WR1ABP, which was located on the 300 Concord Rd. Honeywell building. By then, a few companies were making gear for 2 meter FM and the popularity of the mode surged.

But at about the same time, hobby computing went from a few lunatics making computational devices in their basements to companies offering “home computers” and it seemed like everybody was learning to write code in BASIC. I got distracted from ham radio throughout the rest of the century. After around 1980, I was virtually a silent key, though I still had a station for most of that time – sitting gathering dust,

I’m still more likely to be found pounding a keyboard and hooking up a microcontroller, but I’ve started to become

interested in getting on the air again. You might occasionally hear me on the air now, but I still feel more comfortable on VHF, even though I have HF capability. I'm trying to get into the habit of checking into the BARS net, so look for me there.

Announcements

Westford Apple Blossom Parade needs hams

Hello fellow ham radio community members. It is that time of the year when we start pitching for ham radio support for the annual Westford Apple Blossom Parade. This year's parade will be held rain or shine on Saturday, May 16th. The parade starts in Westford Center and ends at the Abbot School.

It has been hosted by the Westford Kiwanis (<https://westford.org/kiwanis/>) and has a long history in town. PART has been providing comm support for many years.

The parade starts at 10 AM, we usually muster around 8AM for any last-minute updates and to ensure adequate coverage. The parade is pretty much wrapped up around noontime. Your assignment could finish earlier.

All you need is a 2 meter FM handheld that works with the Westford 146.955 WB1GOF repeater. Some assignments are stationary at specific parade route locations; others may be to be as a shadow to one of the Kiwanis Parade organizers. We are looking for 12 (minimum) to 16 hams for this event.

This is a GREAT event for a first-time public service event participant. It's a very laid back and calm event. It's always fun to watch a parade!

If you'd like to sign up or need more information, please contact me, Terry KA8SCP ka8scp@arrl.net

USA 250 Semiquincentennial Special Operating Event

Dear Massachusetts Hams,

I am reaching out to you, would like to be part of the 2026 ARRL Celebration of the USA 250 Semiquincentennial Special Operating Event. This is part of the Year of the Club and the 100th Anniversary of the ARRL Field Organization along with a year-long Worked All States (WAS-250).

I am the state manager for Massachusetts.

For one week in August 2026, there is the ability for stations located in Massachusetts to operate as W1AW/1. ARRL membership is not required. The dates are August 12-21.

August 14th & 15th will be an SSB operation from the New England HamXposition in Marlboro. They will have precedence in choosing the band and mode (probably SSB) for a block of time. We are looking for ops that can get on multiple

times during this week, from your club, home, mobile or portable stations and work stations that will be hunting you. Your transmitter MUST be in Massachusetts.

Modes that can be operated are:

- SSB
- CW
- Digital
- Satellite

ALL Logging MUST be done with computer logging that can export in ADIF format. The log will be sent to me once your operating has completed.

All volunteers will need to work together and share operating times with the team of ops. There will be an operation guide emailed a few weeks before the operating week to all volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact:
Larry Krainson, W1AST FunHamRadio@gmail.co

--de Jon W McCombie, N1ILZ
ARRL Eastern Massachusetts Section Manager
n1ilz@arrl.org



Call for Speakers

HamX is the largest amateur radio convention in the Northeast! With close to 1,800 attendees each year, HamX draws radio amateurs from all over and is an ideal venue to present your ideas and experiences.

This is a call for speakers on topics of general interest to the amateur radio community. Some examples include: Operating practices, contesting, DXing, mobile stations, emergency communications, emerging activities, STEM outreach, club improvement, radio history, restoring antique gear, test equipment, kit building, antenna design, AI in amateur radio, VHF/UHF/Microwave/Mesh, EME and more. If you have a story to share, we would like to hear about it.

To submit a talk proposal, please go to the following website and enter the requested information.
<https://registration.hamx.org/speaker/>

If you have any further questions, please reach out to the program chair at the e-mail address listed below.

We look forward to your contribution at HamX 2026!

--de Mark Noe KE1IU
HamX Program Committee Chairperson
ke1iu@hamx.org

Upgrading Your License? Here's a Resource

If you are thinking of upgrading your license, I recommend that you use HamStudy.org for your practice exams because their practice exams use the same software, that is used to create online exams and BARS in-person exams. With HamStudy.org practice tests you should use a touch screen or keyboard to select the answer, A, B, C, or D.

A mouse is not allowed for in-person or online exams.

--de Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

Making ZOOM available to Elmers

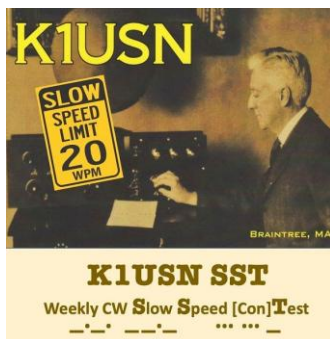
In this time of social distancing, we have been using Zoom for our monthly club meetings. I have been thinking that Elmers could also be using Zoom to coach new hams instead of actually going to visit with them. Elmers could perhaps help with programming a new radio with the new ham sharing their computer screen and the Elmer helping to walk them through the process. An Elmer could have Zoom on their cell phone and show a new ham how their shack was set up. Use your imagination and see how you might use this tool. If you would like to use Zoom for this, contact Bruce, W1LUS@hotmail.com, with a date and a time and a meeting will be setup for you. You may also contact Bruce if you would like training in using Zoom to Elmer someone.

--de Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

Friday and Sunday Night CW Slow Speed Contest

Every Friday and Sunday night, there is a weekly slow-speed CW contest run by the local K1USN guys. This is a good way to polish up your CW skills. See <http://www.k1usn.com/sst.html> for details. Currently, the schedule is:

Fridays 20:00-21:00 UTC (3-4pm EST) and
Mondays 00:00-01:00 UTC (7-8pm EST Sunday).



-- de Tom Walsh, K1TW

Another recurring event:

Straight Key Century Club (SKCC) Weekend Sprintathon – the Saturday following the 6th of every month at 1200 UTC
http://www.skccgroup.com/operating_activities/weekend_sprintathon

BARS Membership

Our current combined membership is 139, with 36 that haven't renewed their membership for 2026.

Anyone with a question about their renewal status can email me at W1LUS@hotmail.com to get your current membership status.

from Bruce Anderson, W1LUS, Treasurer

Secretary's Report for May 2026

April 6, 2026 General Meeting minutes:

Doug convened the meeting at 7:05PM EDT.

Club business:

- Field Day is in two months. We are looking for participants. Location same as last year: Nan's house.

The program started at 7:15 and ended at 8:35.

There were 13 attendees on zoom, plus several more in the Church hall.

We adjourned at 8:45

Treasurer's Report for May 2026

Reminder: 2026 Dues are due starting January 1, 2026. BARS Dues are from January 1 to December 31. Dues for 2026 will remain at \$15. Dues can be paid several ways:

- via bank-to-bank transfer with Zelle, Venmo, PayPal, etc. by sending \$15 to bars.dues@outlook.com,
- with credit card by using the Join/Renewal membership form on the W1HH.org website,
- or with cash or check by mailing \$15 to Billerica ARS, 16 Regis Road, Tewksbury, MA 01876

In April we had Four new / renewals for \$60 income. Our expenses were Zoom \$18.05, PayPal \$1.01.

We now have \$957.49 in the bank and \$1457.25 in our PayPal account for a total of \$2414.74.

Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

BARS Does breakfast every Saturday.

On Saturday mornings at 8:15AM, we meet for a casual, social breakfast at Stelio's restaurant in Billerica.

[Stelio's Family Restaurant, Billerica, MA](#)

April Get-on-the-Air Suggestions from Andy Wallace, KA1GTT

KA1GTT Andy Wallace here. I am offering my input for this month's Get on the Air column. These are contests which can be on HF or VHF/UHF, and may be SSB (voice), CW (Morse code) or digital (FT8, etc.) modes. If you are a beginner, contests can still be a lot of fun. Most of the time the rules expect you to submit electronic logs of your activity, but I know hams who simply want to exchange QSLs for confirmation.

Contests can be frantic - rapid exchanges (what info the stations pass back and forth) and careful rules of engagement. But others are more casual. It always helps to tune in stations and listen to the exchange and get a feel for the methods.

One of the best resources for finding out what contests are upcoming is the WA7BNM website and his 8-day contest calendar at:

<https://www.contestcalendar.com/weeklycont.php>

This gives a snapshot of the next 8 days, and you can instantly see what contests are longer term (like across weekends) and thus more popular.

The 12-month calendar is excellent for getting a snapshot of an entire month in advance. Surprisingly, I find it has more contests listed than the "Perpetual" site view. The 12 month is what I used to compile this month's hot contests:

<https://www.contestcalendar.com/contestcal.php>

Of note: contests are listed in UTC (Coordinated Universal Time or Greenwich Mean Time or Zulu) day and date. This is the time going through the 0° meridian (Greenwich, U.K.). If you are new to ham radio, you need to know hams historically use UTC to align with hams around the world in a way that being on the air at a certain time is simple. We're in Eastern Daylight Time right now, so that means UTC is 4 hours ahead of us. 0000Z being midnight Zulu/UTC/GMT translates to 8:00 PM EST. So, for a typical contest, the start of the contest is 00:01UTC November 7 (Saturday). Subtract five hours and you better have your rig ready at 8:01PM EST Friday evening.

Here is KA1GTT's list of top contests for this month - and please remember these are best guesses on my part.

1. 7th Call Area QSO Party
<http://7qp.org>
1300Z, May 2 to 0700Z, May 3, 2026
Exchange: non-7th-Area: RS(T)+(state/province/DX)
2. Indiana QSO Party
<http://www.hdxcc.org/inqp/rules.html>
1500Z, May 2 to 0300Z, May 3, 2026
Exchange: non-IN: W/VE: RS(T) + (state/province)
3. Delaware QSO Party
<https://www.fsarc.org/>
1700Z, May 2 to 2359Z, May 3, 2026
Exchange: non-DE: RS(T) + (state/province/"DX")
4. New England QSO Party **
<https://neqp.org/rules/>
2000Z, May 2 to 0500Z, May 3 and
1300Z-2400Z, May 3, 2026
Exchange: New England: RS(T)+state+county
Comment: this is a GREAT contest for us in New England! Everyone will be clamoring for NE states especially rather rare ones like RI and ME!
5. Canadian Prairies QSO Party
<https://cpqp.ve6hams.ca/>
1700Z, May 9 to 0300Z, May 10, 2026
Exchange:Non-VE4/5/6:RST+(state/province/"DX")
6. Arkansas QSO Party
<http://www.arkqp.com/>
1400Z, May 16 to 0200Z, May 17, 2026
Exchange: non-AR: RS(T) + (state/province/"DX")
7. CQ WW WPX Contest, CW **
<https://www.cqwp.com/rules.htm>
0000Z, May 30 to 2359Z, May 31, 2026
Exchange: RST + Serial No.
Comments: this is a CW (Morse code) contest, and usually a big one. The exchange is very simple which makes it great for a CW beginner. RST, which stands for Readability (1-5), Strength (1-5) and Tone (1-9). Tone is amusing because it is a throwback to when rigs were made by hams in the basement, may have had poor power supplies, and could have had hum or chirp on what should be a pure CW note. But – RST exchanges in contests are usually simplified. When you're trying to get as many countries as you can, you probably don't care if someone hears you like a local or just barely. So the tradition is, simply say 599 to all contacts! Serial number is simply the sequence of contacts you have made starting at 001 of course. If you know CW at any speed, get on for this one!

**** Top recommendation for this month**

Reminder: details on each of these contests above – and more events – can be found every week on the WA7BNM contest calendar at:

<https://www.contestcalendar.com/weeklycont.php?mode=custom&week=current>

Final comment: not a big bag of contests this month. This is a good time to spruce up your antennas and feedlines, and it's hamfest season too!

If you don't do these contests, at least get on and call or answer! If you get on and enjoy operating one of these events, please send an email to the BARS email reflector, bars@w1hh.org.

BARS Needs You!!!

We are looking for a few good hams to act as net control on the regularly scheduled Wednesday night nets! All it takes is one night a month; if you are interested contact Doug, N1WRN.

Also, the club needs volunteers for light tasks of about 1 hour a month. Are you able to pitch in? Contact Doug Bruce, N1WRN.

Wednesday Night Net

Join us on the Billerica 147.120 Repeater for the weekly BARS net each Wednesday at 8:00 PM (except on the first Wednesday of the month which is club meeting night).

Repeater info:

W1DC

147.12 MHz

+600 kHz (normal) offset

Encode CTCSS 146.2 Hz



The W1DC Site

*Photo courtesy of Dwight Doane
annotations by Bob DeMattia, K1IW.*

Reminder: “kerchunking” the repeater is not only impolite, it’s illegal. It constitutes an unidentified transmission. If you need

to check that you’re making the repeater, say something like “This is <your call> standing by on the frequency.” Thanks for your courtesy.

Club Meetings

Club meetings are held in person (weather permitting) and via Zoom. A link will be sent via the BARS email reflector to all currently paid-up members who might wish to attend via Zoom.

Club meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 PM Eastern time.

VE Sessions

Our VE sessions are held in-person at the Chelmsford Bible Church. Pre-registration for our in-person exams is suggested. Contact w1lus@hotmail.com for registration information.

VE sessions are held every month on the 2nd Thursday at 7:00 PM at Chelmsford Bible Church, 128 Gorham St., Chelmsford MA. Park in back and enter by rear door. [Chelmsford Bible Church Hall, 128 Gorham St, Rear Door, Chelmsford MA 01824-3220 \(map\)](#)

VE Session Report for May 2026

We had two people show up for the April 9, 2026 VE Exam Session. Results were two new Technicians, David, KC1ZJA, and Stephen, KC1ZIX, be sure to say hello if you hear them on the air. We also had one General upgrade and one Extra upgrade.

Our next exam session will be on May 14 at 7:00 PM at the Chelmsford Bible Church.

Thanks to Wayne, KC1ONM, Peter, N1ALO, Neice, KA1ULN, Shawn, N1CVO, and Bill, WZ1L, for their help in conducting this exam session.

While walk-ins are always welcome it speeds the process up if you pre-register for your BARS VE exam session at HamStudy.org.

--de Bruce Anderson, W1LUS

Future Meetings

The next BARS General Meeting will be held via Zoom and in-person at the Chelmsford Bible Church on May 6th at 7:00 PM. For those who prefer, a Zoom link will be sent in the club email feed prior to the meeting.

Subscribe to the BARS Mailing List

To subscribe to the BARS email list, send a blank email to bars-subscribe@w1hh.org and watch for an automated reply. Note that bars-subscribe is all one word.

Reply to that message from the list server and you are then subscribed.

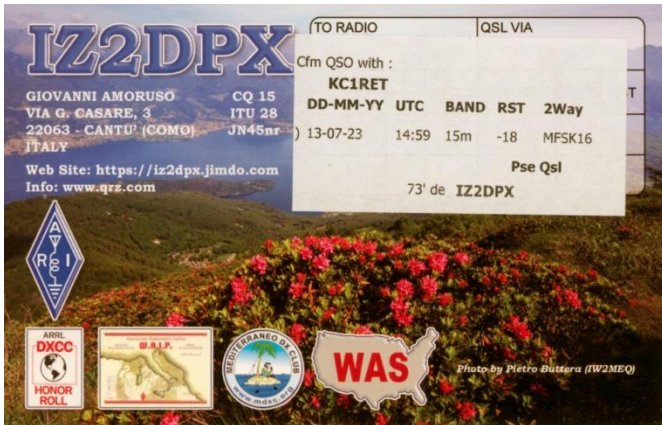
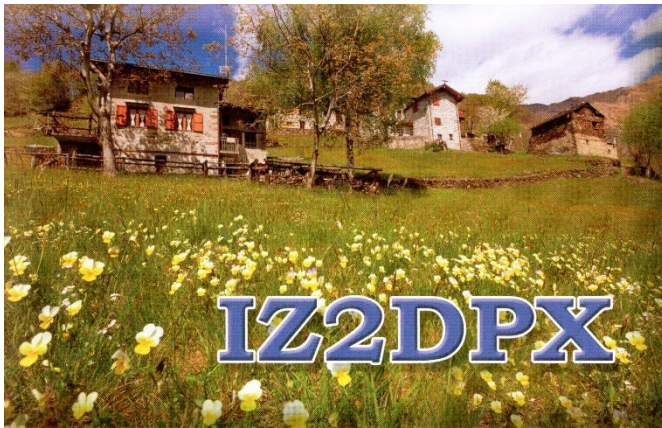
To post to the list, address your email to bars@w1hh.org

Photo Feature: From the Mailbag

As the old saying goes, "April showers bring May flowers!" I took the cheesy way out and have selected 'Flowers' as the theme for May's QSL card collection. (Yeah, I admit I'm grasping a bit to find a theme. I haven't gotten many new cards lately so I've been a bit lacking for inspiration. Suggestions are enthusiastically invited!)

As the recently appointed BARS Field Day Cat Herder I'm looking for someone to take the lead on the antenna system. This person will lead the installation of the antennas used by our Field Day effort. Contact me directly via the email below – Thanks in advance!





Show Me Your Cards! I would like to highlight cards from our club members. Send me a scan of your card or just mail one to me. Or bring one to the next club meeting and I'll collect them. Thanks!

As always, if you have received any interesting cards, hand-drawn or not, please send them along to k1dc.radio@gmail.com and I'll share them with the group!

73, Tim/K1DC

BARS Leadership Team

OFFICERS:

President:	Doug Bruce, N1WRN
Vice President:	David Marcucci, KC1TLF
Treasurer:	Bruce Anderson, W1LUS
Secretary:	Marla Wallace, WA1GSF
BoD:	Bill Poulin, WZ1L
BoD:	Steve Wedge, W1ES/4
Ex Officio:	Gary Frascarelli, W1GFF

VOLUNTEERS:

Net Coordinator:	Doug Bruce, N1WRN
Newsletter Editor:	Marla Wallace, WA1GSF
New Member Outreach:	Doug Bruce, N1WRN
Field Day Chair:	Tim Carter, K1DC
Webmaster:	David Marcucci, KC1TLF

Parting Shot

J. R. R. Tolkien was a linguist. He invented a language for the dwarves. But he is best known for the poetry he wrote in Elvish.

Which he wrote down using the alphabet.